United Nations system CEB/2016/6

Chief Executives Board for Coordination

9 November 2016

Report of the High-level Committee on Programmes at its thirty-second session

(United Nations Headquarters, New York, 29 and 30 September 2016)

I. Introduction

1. The High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) held its thirty-second session at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 29 and 30 September 2016. The agenda of the meeting and the list of participants are contained in annexes I and II, respectively, to the present report.

2. In opening the first session of the Committee under her chairmanship, Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), expressed her pleasure at leading the Committee and her intention to do so by continuing to build on the recognized strengths of the Committee. The Chair underscored that the particular value added of the Committee, as the "thought leader" of the United Nations system, was to promote and champion coordination and coherence in policy and programmes by drawing on the analytical prowess and intellectual honesty of its members. In particular, the Committee was challenged to respond to the rigorous demands of the ambitious new sustainable development paradigm by promoting a whole-of-system perspective that transcended the pillars of the United Nations mandate.

3. The Chair observed that, as an agenda of transformation and integration, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 interconnected and indivisible Sustainable Development Goals called for greater strategic thinking, creativity and innovation, as well as the ability to effectively collaborate as partners. Above all, the new framework required United Nations system entities and other stakeholders, including Member States, to rise above the "siloed" structures that had tended to serve as organizing principles for the international community and its composite parts for decades.

4. Seventy years after its founding, the United Nations itself was at a crossroads and in need of revitalization, reinvention and transformation in order to effectively support the Agenda's key tenets — people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships — and to ensure that no one was left behind. Honest reflection and frank dialogue were needed for the United Nations system to arrive at a common

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and shared understanding of the nature and trajectory of that change. The Chair stressed that the High-level Committee on Programmes, with its capacity to "think across" global issues, was uniquely positioned to rise to that challenge and contribute to greater integration of development, human rights, humanitarian and peace and security concerns. In doing so, the Committee needed to focus its work on concrete and implementable deliverables that furthered the revitalization of the United Nations.

5. The Committee warmly welcomed Dr. Chan as its Chair and adopted the agenda of the session as proposed (see annex I to the present report).

II. Agenda item 1: Risk, prevention and resilience

6. The Chair recalled that various discussions in recent sessions of the Committee had pointed to the need for a coherent policy framework on risk management and resilience-building, identifying risk, prevention and resilience as a potential "common thread" connecting different United Nations pillars. At its thirty-first session, in March 2016, the Committee had considered a discussion paper on the topic presented by the World Food Programme (WFP) and requested further exploration of those analytical concepts, their interlinkages and their potential application across different United Nations pillars. At the CEB session in April 2016, the Secretary-General had highlighted the expectation that the Committee would deepen the United Nations system's conceptual understanding of risk, prevention and resilience, perhaps with a view to articulating a system-wide policy.

7. Expressing appreciation for his leadership, the Chair invited Paul Howe, Chief of the Emergencies and Transitions Unit, Policy and Programme Division, WFP, to introduce the paper entitled "Risk, prevention and resilience: exploring the conceptual linkages", prepared by the Committee's task team under his leadership. Mr. Howe stated that, in view of growing concerns that numerous crises would threaten and set back efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, a proactive approach to managing natural and man-made hazards was now needed more than ever. Several concepts, including risk, prevention and resilience, could be drawn upon to frame such an approach.

8. Against that background, the paper offered definitions for and examined relations among the concepts, which had largely developed independently in different contexts and thus tended to lack consistent understanding. The paper then explored the potential utility of a "risk and resilience framework", with prevention as a key activity within it. While such a framework would be most obviously applicable to the United Nations development pillar, it might also have the potential to be useful with reference to the peace and security and human rights pillars. Next, taking a systems perspective, the paper considered the possibility of applying such an overarching cross-pillar framework to the United Nations system's wider development activities.

9. In conclusion, the paper outlined three broad options for going forward, for consideration by the Committee:

(a) Interoperability of concepts: allowing the concepts of risk, resilience and prevention to continue to develop independently, but attempting to ensure a degree

of interoperability between them by establishing common definitions and points of convergence;

(b) A coherent framework for concepts: seeking to bring the concepts into a single risk and resilience framework by resolving the conceptual ambiguities and establishing a standardized sequence of actions for risk management and resilience-building, including across humanitarian and development work;

(c) A framework for the wider development context: seeking to incorporate these concepts into a system-wide view of the work of the United Nations to guide its broader efforts to achieve sustainable development.

10. Mr. Howe added that each option had advantages and disadvantages. Whichever was chosen, it would be important to consider how to overcome the practical barriers to translating it into practice.

11. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee affirmed the importance of greater clarity on these interlinked concepts and their utility for the work of the United Nations system. Applauding the high intellectual rigour and ambition of the paper, the Committee was unanimous in acknowledging the need to continue with the valuable work initiated on this topic. Views diverged, however, on the most appropriate and feasible option to move the work forward, with several members expressing openness to all three but others preferring to start with work of a relatively modest scope.

12. Several members supported the option of developing a framework that conceptualized risk and resilience as part of the wider development context. One important benefit of such an approach was that it would help to clarify the relationship between risk reduction, including prevention, and sustainable development. Such clarity, in turn, could support efforts to identify the costs of failing to reduce vulnerabilities and prevent crises and disasters, in terms of development gains lost and opportunities wasted to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, which provide a blueprint and call to acknowledge and manage risk. This was critical for encouraging more investments in prevention, which continued to be vastly insufficient in spite of growing attention to the issue.

13. Other members considered such a comprehensive framework to be too ambitious, noting significant methodological challenges associated with it. Some also cautioned that intellectual simplicity might not necessarily increase utility, arguing that the "lowest common denominator" might not be conducive to implementation at the country level. At the same time, members overall acknowledged the necessity to provide the United Nations system and its partners with practical guidance and orientation and to demonstrate leadership in embracing the complexity of the 2030 Agenda and in taking a proactive and forward-looking approach to prevention. According to several members, such an approach would build on the World Humanitarian Summit and its key outcomes. Any framework, some argued, would need to be flexible and not too prescriptive, allowing for context-specific, demand-driven actions that were applicable to various situations, including fragile settings.

14. Despite such divergence of views, members invariably underscored that the interconnected and indivisible Sustainable Development Goals provided the

overarching strategic objective towards which all efforts across the pillars of the United Nations system were geared and that an innovative, multi-hazard and cross-pillar approach to assessing and managing risks to sustainable development was indeed required more than ever. Overall, they viewed the three proposed options as a continuum of necessary efforts that could be pursued in steps, rather than as mutually exclusive pathways. There was broad agreement within the Committee that, at a minimum, interoperability of concepts, taken preferably a bit further by also considering its programmatic application in the broader context, would help strengthen the credibility and effectiveness of the United Nations system. In addition, common language and conceptual understanding could serve as an enabling basis for joint analysis within, but potentially also across, pillars.

15. Commenting on the substance of a proposed risk and resilience framework, several members argued that it should aim to contribute to overcoming the humanitarian-development divide and discourage focusing on resilience in isolation from the broader sustainable development context. Such a narrow focus could divert attention from efforts to address underlying vulnerabilities, drivers of risks and root causes of humanitarian crises, by means such as safeguarding human rights, empowering vulnerable individuals and communities and strengthening governance and institutional robustness. A suggestion was also made to take a closer look at the risks and their underlying drivers that threaten peace and/or undermine economic and social rights, and further explore the notion of resilience as it related to conflict and human rights violations. In addition, it was cautioned that protection of vulnerable people and communities should be based on human rights rather than avoidance of exposure to risks, an aspect that could be lost in the effort of developing a simplified risk and resilience framework.

16. A member also pointed out the importance of examining the relationships among the elements of the framework, arguing, for example, that an overemphasis on notions of resilience, without due attention to States' obligations of prevention on the one hand, and accountability on the other, could lead to an undercutting of human rights, however unwittingly. Recalling examples of the disproportionate impact of extreme weather events on minorities in some countries, it was stressed that the United Nations approach to such issues needed to have a dedicated focus on non-discrimination, differentiation (vulnerability analysis) and disaggregation of data (i.e., the "whom" of risk analysis).

17. Several members underscored the need to move swiftly beyond conceptual discussions to efforts to operationalize these concepts at the country level, noting that it was important to focus on results and impacts. To that end, the framework needed to be less abstract and more illustrative, for instance through the use of examples. It was also important to identify channels through which the concepts, as well as a potential framework, would inform and support national development and disaster risk reduction plans. In that regard, it might be useful to consider the applicability and utility of a risk and resilience framework for other stakeholders beyond the United Nations system. The role of Member States was also underscored.

18. Going forward, it was felt important to continue to ensure linkages and complementarity with other relevant efforts of the United Nations system, Member States and other partners. For instance, the ongoing work under the United Nations

Development Group (UNDG) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on the humanitarian-development nexus was mentioned as relevant, as was that of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction. It was further suggested that this initiative, at a more advanced stage, might also benefit from considering linkages with the work of the High-level Committee on Programmes on enterprise risk management. Also noted were the discussions, in the context of the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations, of the system's role in supporting countries in reducing the likelihood of a crisis occurring or recurring, through an increased focus on prevention. It might prove valuable to consider potential lessons that the system could draw from the efforts of other actors, in particular the insurance industry, though caution was also voiced, stressing the importance of a human rights-based approach with an emphasis on the obligations of the State, rather than uncritical deference to profit-driven private insurance companies.

19. Reflecting on the rich and detailed discussion, Mr. Howe noted broad agreement among members on the need for clarification and harmonization of concepts and their relation to the Sustainable Development Goals. While more analysis seemed necessary before deciding which framework, and in some cases which terminology, would be most helpful to develop, any eventual framework would have to be flexible and voluntary, and of practical relevance at the field level. He observed that while the work in the current phase was normative, not operational, in accordance with the request of CEB, ultimately it would need to be directed to guiding implementation. He recognized that the task team would need to draw upon and support the relevant activities being carried out by different actors as it continued its effort.

20. The Chair concluded that the interoperability of concepts offered a good starting point, while encouraging the task team to broaden the scope of its work as appropriate in consideration of the potential merits of the other options. She further opined that it was important for the United Nations system to exhibit leadership in adapting to changing realities and inspire Member States to do the same. Concluding the session, the Chair requested the task team, under the leadership of WFP, to continue with its valuable work on the basis of the feedback provided and report on its progress for further review by the Committee at its thirty-third session.

Conclusion

21. **The Committee welcomed the progress of work as outlined in the paper on risk, prevention and resilience and, as a first step, requested the task team, under the leadership of WFP, to deepen its work on interoperability of concepts and a potential conceptual framework on risk and resilience, taking into account the feedback and guidance provided during the discussion. The Committee agreed to revert to the item at its thirty-third session, with a report on progress.**

III. Agenda item 2: United Nations system leadership model in the post-2015 era

22. The Chair recalled that CEB, at its April 2016 session, considering the critical importance of transformative leadership highlighted in the CEB common principles for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, had tasked its high-level committees to help develop a shared concept of leadership characteristics necessary in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals, across different functions, levels and locations.

23. Accordingly, a joint task team of the High-level Committee on Programmes and the High-level Committee on Management had been formed, facilitated by the United Nations System Staff College, with the programmes committee focusing on the conceptual and definitional aspects from programmatic and policy perspectives, benefitting from the managerial expertise of the management committee. A discussion paper reflecting the task team's efforts thus far was before the Committee for inputs and guidance. The team's efforts, focused especially on global perspectives, had been closely coordinated with the complementary country-focused work of UNDG. The two processes would be joined together to produce a unified and comprehensive proposal, reflecting the perspectives and expertise of all three high-level committees, to be considered by CEB at its first regular session of 2017.

24. The discussion paper was introduced by Claire Messina, Deputy Director for Programme Management and Business Development of the United Nations System Staff College, who had facilitated the work of the joint task team. She stated that the task team's efforts had complemented and built on the higher-level values and overarching principles of leadership articulated through UNDG and were focused on going into more detail on what leaders should do and how the framework could be implemented. In its deliberations, the task team had expressed a preference for a "framework" — lighter and less prescriptive than a "model" — aimed at leading to concrete applications at agency, inter-agency and system-wide levels. It had also recommended focusing on characteristics that were new or different in the era of the 2030 Agenda: system thinking, co-creation and managing change and innovation.

25. The process of developing the framework would be highly participatory, with the aim of leading to a strong sense of ownership by United Nations system entities and widespread utilization of the framework. It would also seek to model some of the behaviours to be included in the framework itself, namely co-creation of both process and framework; involvement of United Nations staff across functions, levels and locations; consultation with non-United Nations stakeholders; and a step-by-step approach featuring designing, prototyping, piloting, scaling and continuous feedback loops akin to design thinking.

26. Ms. Messina solicited the Committee's guidance, especially on how leadership characteristics in support of the 2030 Agenda differed from existing leadership concepts; whether the framework should serve as a human resources tool or more ambitiously as an organizational tool to help shape the culture in which leadership is exercised; how to embrace and leverage the diversity and differences in the United Nations system while striving for a common framework; and what would make the framework inspiring to staff.

27. Craig Mokhiber of OHCHR, co-chair of the working group on leadership under UNDG, provided a complementary briefing on the work of that group. Since its establishment in 2014, the working group, with system-wide engagement beyond UNDG membership, had conducted reviews of relevant policies, guidance and assessments and facilitated consultations with resident coordinators and senior leaders at the field, regional and headquarters levels. On the basis of that process, the United Nations leadership model had been produced, identifying seven principal characteristics of a United Nations leader necessary to respond to the imperatives of the Charter, the norms of the Organization and the evolving policy framework, as well as the sustainable development agenda: norm-based, principled, accountable, multidimensional, transformational, collaborative and self-applied. That model, which had been endorsed by the UNDG Advisory Group, could be considered to define the "who we are" of United Nations system leadership. Mr. Mokhiber expressed support for the work planned to join it with the "what we do" (competencies) and "how we do it" (behaviours) in a unified High-level Committee on Programmes/High-level Committee on Management/UNDG proposal to be presented to CEB.

28. Before opening the floor for discussion, the Chair observed that leadership was one of the single most critical aspects of United Nations reform, stressing the necessity to reflect on whether the organizations had the right people on board and the extent to which they were nurtured to maximize their potential. She regarded this initiative also as an opportunity to develop a strong, inspiring proposal to improve the human resources system across the United Nations system in all its diversity, making it more transparent, fair, compassionate, nurturing and empowering.

29. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee expressed support for the work undertaken to date by both the High-level Committee on Management/High-level Committee on Programmes joint task team and the working group under UNDG and looked forward to considering a unified and comprehensive product. An aspirational outlook was seen as important to inspire and foster a different type of leadership that could fulfil the system's responsibility to help Member States meet the challenges of the 2030 Agenda. The Committee felt that the leadership framework should serve as a strategic organizational tool, from which human resources strategies would naturally flow. The collective vision and guidance of all United Nations system executive heads, including the incoming Secretary-General, was seen as critical in that regard. Members stressed the importance of quickly translating the concepts into actionable policies, supported by education and training. Many felt that co-creation was a particularly important concept on which success would be judged.

30. Through recent intergovernmental agreements, Member States had defined the vision to which the United Nations system had a responsibility to respond. In that context, it was felt that United Nations leaders should exhibit humility and be guided by nationally defined priorities, while remaining fully committed to international norms and standards. Several members stressed the need to emphasize in the framework that leadership and accountability were complementary and that one could not be achieved without the other. Considering the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda, the Committee identified a breaking-down-the-silos mentality as a

particularly important behavioural change that needed to be prominently incorporated in the framework. Also important was a catalytic role for leaders in mobilizing partnerships and stimulating wider action.

31. Members pointed out that leadership was not exercised exclusively by leaders or managers and, therefore, the framework should be applicable at all staff levels, targeting both existing and emerging leaders. At the same time, the importance of creating a "professional management culture" was mentioned, where willingness to challenge and be challenged and be open to considering various options were identified as important characteristics. The need for the existing United Nations values of respect for diversity, integrity and professionalism to underpin the leadership framework was stressed. Further elements that were suggested for incorporation included gender awareness and sensitivity both in the way leaders recruit, retain and promote women and in the substantive pursuit of gender equality in the context of sustainable development; inclusive collaboration; a people-centred approach; and a principled human rights-based approach as stressed, for example, in the Human Rights Up Front initiative.

32. The importance of leadership skills development that enabled staff to react to changing circumstances was emphasized; an approach that did not teach leaders what to think but how to think was thus seen as appropriate. It was also suggested that the framework should build skills that would be valued inside and outside the United Nations system. The Chair seconded that notion, seeing mobility between United Nations entities and other organizations as presenting important growth opportunities.

33. Several members addressed field-level challenges specifically. There was a need to translate the aspirational vision of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the vision of the Agenda for Humanity emanating from the World Humanitarian Summit, to the country level. That would involve working towards shared outcomes, ensuring that no one was left behind, taking risk-informed approaches and engaging in new ways with partners. Such changes, some argued, would require empowered leaders to have different conversations with Governments in line with those new approaches and to be more externally focused in their coordination and cooperation with partners. Those shifts would need to be well supported by headquarters. The necessity, at times, to be courageous in interactions with Member States in relation to human rights questions or attempts to influence human resources matters or reinforce silos through funding was also mentioned. It was important to examine the fundamentals of what constituted a functioning system and seek enabling support from donors, for example in the form of funding that encouraged cooperation.

34. Pledging to take the Committee's feedback into account in the work going forward, Ms. Messina highlighted four key points that she took from the discussion: the importance of focusing on the characteristics that drove change; the value of the model being in its operationalization; the need to place more emphasis on attitude as opposed to knowledge or skills; and the concurrent need for an environment conducive to producing leaders and for leaders who could change the environment. Mr. Mokhiber thanked members for the many points raised that reinforced the model developed in the UNDG paper, which could constitute the definition of "who" United Nations system leaders were and serve as a basis for the subsequent consideration of "what" and "how", to ultimately form a single integrated proposal.

35. In conclusion, the Chair expressed appreciation for the excellent work undertaken by all three high-level committees and reaffirmed that the High-level Committee on Programmes, building on the day's discussion, would work closely with the High-level Committee on Management and UNDG to produce a single, unified and comprehensive proposal, reflecting the integrated perspectives and expertise of all three committees, for consideration by CEB in 2017.

Conclusion

36. **The Committee supported the seven leadership elements outlined in the paper on the United Nations leadership model developed under UNDG auspices as a basis for further efforts to be undertaken by the Committee in collaboration with the High-level Committee on Management and UNDG. The Committee further supported the approach, plan and focus areas for such further work as proposed by the joint High-level Committee on Programmes/High-level Committee on Management task team, pending adjustments, as appropriate, in light of the comments and inputs provided during the discussions (and those from the High-level Committee on Management). The Committee requested the joint task team, together with the working group on leadership under UNDG, to prepare a unified and comprehensive proposal on United Nations system leadership for consideration by the Committee at its thirty-third session, with a view to submitting it to CEB at its first regular session of 2017.**

IV. Agenda item 3: Cross-pillar linkages and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

37. The High-level Committee on Programmes, at its thirtieth session, deliberated on a discussion paper prepared by the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, entitled "Promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies and preventing violent conflict". The focus of the paper was on strengthening collaboration between the development and peace and security actors of the United Nations in preventing conflict and supporting delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals. CEB, following discussion of the paper at its November 2015 session, tasked the Committee to develop an analysis to address, from policy and strategic coherence perspectives, the interlinkages between distinct Sustainable Development Goals and wider peace and security concerns and respective cross-pillar integration opportunities centred on prevention. That work was carried out under the leadership of the United Nations University.

38. At the current session, the Committee had before it an analytical paper entitled "Peaceful, just and inclusive societies: a think piece on linkages in Agenda 2030", prepared by the United Nations University in consultation with 21 volunteering entities. The Committee was invited to reflect on a way forward for the United Nations system on the issue of cross-linkages and the role of the Committee in that regard.

39. In introducing the paper, Rahul Chandran, of the United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, noted that it was intended primarily to stimulate

discussion rather than provide comprehensive conclusions on the issue of cross-pillar linkages. In accordance with the directives of CEB, the analysis was focused on Goal 16, which called for the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies with justice for all, building on the Committee's earlier work, notably the discussion paper prepared by the Department of Political Affairs.

40. Providing an overview of the paper, Mr. Chandran observed that while the Sustainable Development Goals provided a framework that was universal and deeply interlinked, little was actually known about the nature of those linkages. Given that the actual model of linkages would need to emerge from narratives and conversations that needed to be carried out at the national and local levels, among a wide variety of stakeholders, the United Nations had an important role in enabling and taking part in those national dialogues. In that regard, understanding normative obligations, for example around human rights and gender equality and how they related to the Sustainable Development Goals, was critical if the United Nations system wished to engage with national stakeholders from a position of strength and clarity.

41. The paper identified the lack of adequate knowledge and hard evidence on linkages among the Sustainable Development Goals as a primary constraint for the United Nations in effectively providing advice to Member States in that regard. That constraint was especially pronounced with respect to Goal 16. Nevertheless, there were opportunities for the United Nations system to act collectively, to exert leverage and influence through partnerships with other actors, especially at the national level, and to return to the normative fundamentals as a point of universal engagement. That was predicated upon investments in knowledge, innovation and experimentation, the empowerment of staff and leadership with the capacity to engage in system thinking, co-creation and managing change and innovation, perspectives that were also relevant to the Committee's consideration of the United Nations leadership model.

42. During the discussions, Committee members acknowledged the challenges outlined in the paper, though to a lesser degree of pessimism. Indeed, several members were of the view that the evidence base was in fact more robust than presented in the paper, both in terms of the peace and Sustainable Development Goal linkage specifically but also, more broadly, the benefits of an integrated cross-pillar approach. There existed a body of knowledge and experience from which the United Nations system could draw important lessons as it deepened the work. For example, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime pointed out the work that had been undertaken on the links between crime and development. Furthermore, a representative of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East noted that that agency's work encompassed different pillars in a geographically contained setting and thus might offer a concrete case for useful analysis.

43. Nevertheless, members broadly agreed with and welcomed the conclusion on the need to fill the gaps in knowledge, thinking, data and analytical capacity in the United Nations system, endowing the system with the capacity to support interlinked Sustainable Development Goals and provide differentiated programmatic support in response to countries' diverse needs and priorities. In that context, it was suggested that knowledge gaps be analysed on three levels — (a) the normative,

(b) operational experience and (c) research, academia and the private sector — in order to gain further insights into the current capacity and consider steps necessary to strengthen it.

44. Commenting specifically on the paper's analysis of the linkage through the lens of Goal 16, some speakers pointed out that the humanitarian agenda could neither conceptually nor practically be separated from the sustainable development agenda, and that a more refined approach to examining linkages was thus required. One participant observed that the earlier paper by the Department of Political Affairs had taken a broader view of interlinkages between peace and conflict prevention and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and expressed the hope that that wider perspective could be restored. A number of Committee members highlighted specific issues that were deemed to be of particular relevance with respect to the linkages around Goal 16 and which required a deeper analysis. Those issues included the role of external drivers of conflict, existing power relations and patriarchal structures, conflict prevention and reconciliation and the role of social dialogue.

45. One member, pointing out that the root causes of conflict (deprivation, discrimination, effects of climate change, etc.) were addressed throughout the 2030 Agenda, cautioned against randomly selecting some goals while excluding others, which could undermine the integrated nature of the new agenda. Given the complex content of Goal 16, it might not be correct for the analysis to reduce it to a "peace goal", just as earlier efforts to define it as a "human rights goal" had been rightly rejected. In addition, given the situation and drivers in conflict countries, an assumption that domestic conflict prevention would be largely adequate for advancing peace might leave an important analytical lacuna — that of the international dimension.

46. A considerable number of Committee members pointed to the need to consider the country context and the differentiated needs and priorities of countries when exploring interlinkages among the Sustainable Development Goals. Facilitating dialogue on linkages in implementation at the country level was seen as an important contribution by the United Nations system. In that context, many participants stressed the need to seek engagements beyond government ministries and include other national and local stakeholders, such as civil society and community groupings. The challenge for the system was to maintain a holistic view of implementation — the outlook of a prime minister, rather than that of a line minister, as one participant put it — and support sometimes difficult decision-making involving possible trade-offs among competing priorities in an institutional and political landscape where authority tended to operate through sectoral channels, especially at the national level.

47. Members underscored the importance of jointly defining and working collaboratively towards shared outcomes across United Nations system and government entities. Areas that required specific attention in that regard included strengthening equality, especially gender equality, promoting social inclusion and protecting human rights. Some speakers also pointed out that any joint approaches to cross-pillar collaboration must be firmly anchored in the competitive advantage of the United Nations system, namely its role as the custodian of globally agreed normative frameworks and its ability to provide participatory spaces for political

consultations and consensus-building. A number of instruments, both normative and operational, were already at the disposal of the system, and serious efforts were under way to advance integration on the ground, including common country assessments, the "Delivering as one" approach and the Human Rights Up Front initiative. The lack of data, especially disaggregated data, was seen by many as a serious impediment to identifying those who were excluded and left behind. Members stressed that the United Nations system had an important role to play in that area but needed to strengthen its capacity to do so.

48. The dynamic interlinkages among all Sustainable Development Goals created complexities that could risk overwhelming those tasked with supporting the Agenda's implementation, potentially leading to paralysis and fragmentation. Some members thus advocated for a pragmatic approach that focused, as an initial step, on integration in priority areas for action where such integration was practical and feasible. On the other hand, the Committee was cautioned by one participant against settling for a "low-hanging fruit" approach to avoid the complexities of the 2030 Agenda, including its normative foundation.

49. The diversity of the United Nations was also recognized as a strength. It was stressed that the system must work in a coordinated, coherent and complementary manner, drawing on the expertise of the individual entities, to support the achievement of the 17 indivisible goals and to minimize the risk of overlaps, duplication and inefficient use of resources.

50. Members expressed the view that both incentives and institutional mechanisms needed to be put in place to help United Nations country teams to better integrate by working across mandates and structures. For that to happen, a fundamentally different way of working was needed that emphasized and rewarded innovation and creativity. The diversity of the United Nations system, and the knowledge and expertise that were locked up within it, were its strongest assets. To unlock that knowledge required a leadership model that promoted a culture of collaboration and the ability to drive change.

51. In conclusion, the Chair thanked the United Nations University for having provided the Committee with a stimulating think piece that had sparked a useful debate. The topic of interlinkages and cross-pillar integration was at the heart of the implementation and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite divergent views on various points contained in the analytical paper, the Chair confirmed broad agreement within the Committee that more needed to be done to enhance the United Nations system's knowledge, thinking and data capacity in order to build a deeper, more dynamic and shared understanding of the linkages across the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

Conclusion

52. **The Committee tasked the Secretariat with developing, in consultation with relevant entities and taking into account the discussions just concluded, a concrete proposal on how to take forward an effort aimed at enhancing the United Nations system's knowledge, thinking and data capacity, for consideration by the Committee at its thirty-third session.**

V. Agenda item 4: Equality and non-discrimination at the heart of sustainable development

53. The Chair recalled that the Committee had begun its engagement with this topic at its twenty-ninth session, in March 2015. It had approved a positioning paper and a draft CEB statement of commitment at its thirtieth and thirty-first sessions, respectively. In the statement of commitment issued on 27 April 2016,[1] CEB had requested the Committee to develop a "shared framework for action" to put the imperative to combat inequalities and discrimination at the forefront of United Nations efforts to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Accordingly, a draft shared framework, developed by the Committee's consultative group on inequalities under the leadership of OHCHR and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), was now before the Committee for approval.

54. The framework was introduced by the consultative group's co-chairs, Craig Mokhiber of OHCHR and Moez Doraid of UN-Women. Mr. Mokhiber recalled that the draft framework had been developed through several rounds of consultations within the consultative group, following which the entire membership of the Committee had been given an opportunity to provide preliminary feedback. The proposed framework had been developed on the basis of the positioning paper and the CEB statement previously approved by the Committee. Following the Committee's advice against a heavy system-wide action plan, the proposal attempted to build on existing policies, tools and methodologies and to focus on concrete action and greater coherence.

55. Mr. Doraid noted that the 2030 Agenda included two goals explicitly concerned with equality (Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 10 on inequality within and among countries), while all other Sustainable Development Goals called for more equitable development and access to the constituent elements of development for all people. Member States had put leaving-no-one-behind at the heart of the new Agenda and committed themselves to a range of goals and targets that directly addressed discrimination and inequalities within and among countries. In response to that call, the draft framework set out a conceptual framework that comprehensively addressed equality, non-discrimination and equity, covering both horizontal and vertical inequalities, inequalities of opportunities and outcomes, intergenerational equity and global inequalities among countries.

56. Mr. Mokhiber concluded by outlining the actions proposed in the draft framework to ensure coherence, fill gaps, develop a more integrated response and expedite United Nations system action. He highlighted the next steps for its implementation, namely (a) integration into the strategic frameworks, policy guidance and plans of CEB member organizations; (b) periodic review of progress by the Committee; and (c) engagement with UNDG towards operationalization at the country level.

57. Expressing appreciation for the stellar work done to date, the Chair recalled that the draft before the Committee already reflected extensive feedback received

[1] Available from www.unsceb.org/CEBPublicFiles/CEB%20Jt%20Statement%20of%20Commitment_%20Combat%20inequalities%20and%20discrimination-ODS.pdf.

prior to the current session, and thus urged members to focus on the way forward and not to reopen or reiterate what had already been agreed to in the previous sessions.

58. The Committee expressed strong support for the proposed framework and enthusiasm to contribute to its implementation, commending the highly consultative manner in which it had been developed. Combatting inequalities and discrimination was seen as a unifying theme for the entire United Nations system, while it was recognized that the framework would be operationalized within the different mandates of the individual institutions. The need for a system-wide approach to this challenge was stressed, including across development and humanitarian work, with due respect for humanitarian principles. Many felt that this initiative demonstrated the Committee's value added in translating the aspiration to put equality at the heart of sustainable development into concrete terms, to which members could contribute on the basis of their own mandates and expertise.

59. Members suggested a number of issues that could be further emphasized in or added to the paper, including identification of different forms of vulnerable situations in which individuals might find themselves, including as victims of trafficking; a greater emphasis on migrants and refugees as rights holders under universal human rights and international refugee law and more focus on the drivers of migration and displacement; further elaboration of the topic of exclusion of vulnerable groups from the formal economy; misuse of criminal law against certain population groups that further exacerbated inequalities; and support for measures to prevent and reduce urban slums, which were themselves a manifestation of inequality and discrimination. It was also suggested that explicit reference be made to the right to enjoy scientific progress and cultural rights, and that the regional dimension, particularly as it related to connectivity, cybersecurity and mobility, be strengthened.

60. Furthermore, the importance of combatting inequalities and discrimination in the context of humanitarian programming was highlighted, for example with regard to access to assistance and services. In addition to promotion of more equitable global trading and financial systems, action to support the development and growth of countries' cultural and creative sectors to increase the flow of cultural goods and services was suggested. The opportunity to reduce poverty and inequalities by valuing and remunerating services linked to natural assets (e.g., coastal management, sustainable agriculture, landscape management, etc.) was also highlighted.

61. One member felt that, as presented, the framework focused disproportionately on income and wealth disparities and would benefit from a more multidimensional approach that captured political, environmental, social, cultural, spatial and knowledge dimensions. It was further observed that equality and inclusion were different but related issues (for example, many forms of inequality could not be analysed in terms of discrimination) and that further analysis on their connections was needed. Given the importance of social science research to identifying the causes, extent and impact of inequality and the most effective policies for promoting equality, reference was made to the recommendations contained in the 2016 *World Social Science Report*, "Challenging inequalities: pathways to a just world".

62. The difficulty in obtaining the data necessary to ensure that no one was left behind was acknowledged, in particular as they related to some vulnerable groups, such as victims of human trafficking and smuggling, and in cases where populations were criminalized. In that context, the Committee was reminded that disaggregated data needed to be handled carefully to protect the safety, security and privacy of vulnerable groups. The People Living with HIV Stigma Index, a community-led data collection effort informing analysis of inequalities and discrimination, was offered as an additional measurement and monitoring tool that could be utilized by the United Nations system.

63. It was noted that there was a proliferation of monitoring structures around the Sustainable Development Goals and that it would be important to harmonize and align monitoring of inequalities/discrimination with other mechanisms. Moreover, agreement on the disaggregation of data, especially as it related to inequalities and discrimination, was necessary. The Global AIDS Response Progress Reporting and the Joint Programme Monitoring System were highlighted as relevant accountability mechanisms. It was also observed that some of the elements addressed in the paper (e.g., universal health coverage, protection of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, etc.) were considered controversial in some contexts and work would be needed to determine how to overcome challenges to implementation.

64. Messrs. Mokhiber and Doraid thanked the Committee for its strong support and its constructive suggestions, which they felt referred mostly to elements that were already present in the draft and could easily be deepened on the basis of specific language to be received from members.

65. The Chair concluded by confirming that the Committee was prepared to approve the shared framework for action, updated with suggested changes to be submitted in writing, for endorsement by CEB. Given the criticality of this work to the United Nations system's delivery on the 2030 Agenda, the Committee considered it important to be periodically informed of progress and provide guidance on key strategic issues or systemic bottlenecks that might be identified in the course of the implementation. To that end, the Committee welcomed sustained engagement of its consultative group on inequalities under the continuing leadership of OHCHR and UN-Women. The Chair also underscored the importance of linkages between policy/normative work and country-level action, noting with appreciation that the Committee's work was coordinated closely with relevant UNDG mechanisms, with a view to operationalization at the country level.

Conclusion

66. **The Committee approved the shared framework for action to put equality and non-discrimination at the heart of sustainable development (see CEB/2016/6/Add.1), subject to the incorporation of comments made, for submission to CEB for endorsement at its second regular session of 2016.**

VI. Agenda item 5: Follow-up to the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants

67. The Chair recalled that the General Assembly, on 19 September 2016, had convened a high-level plenary meeting in New York on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants. The meeting had resulted in the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (see General Assembly resolution 71/1), which included a series of political commitments undertaken by Governments for refugees and migrants. The Declaration also recognized the role of the United Nations system in supporting countries of origin, destination and transition as well as the services the system directly provided to migrants and refugees.

68. The Chair took the opportunity to warmly welcome the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as a full member of the Committee, recalling that the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of IOM had signed a relationship agreement between their two organizations on the occasion of the high-level plenary meeting, effectively bringing IOM into the United Nations family of organizations.

69. Noting that the objective of the discussion was to reflect on the outcome of the high-level plenary meeting and consider the role of the United Nations system in its follow-up, the Chair asked the Committee to focus on the need for: (a) any specific actions required of the United Nations system in the follow-up; (b) any particular system-wide efforts or joint actions; and (c) any potential role for the Committee in that regard. The Chair invited Karen AbuZayd, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, to brief the Committee on the outcome of the meeting and necessary follow-up.

70. Stressing that large movements of refugees and migrants was an issue of truly global proportions requiring the engagement of all countries and the entire United Nations system, the Special Adviser expressed her gratitude for the constructive engagement of all relevant United Nations organizations in the lead-up to and during the high-level plenary meeting. With the holding of the meeting and the adoption of the New York Declaration, a number of tangible commitments for improving the situation of refugees and migrants had been made. Most notably, the meeting had created momentum for the development of a global compact on refugees and a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration; reached agreement to hold an intergovernmental conference on international migration in 2018; recognized humanitarian-development linkages and the rights of all migrants, regardless of their migration status; affirmed the commitment to education for all children regardless of their migration status; and addressed the issue of children in detention and protracted refugee situations. Above all, the high-level plenary meeting and the New York Declaration had acknowledged the shared responsibility for refugees and migrants and the need for the international community to do more to address the global challenge of large movements of refugees and migrants.

71. While the primary responsibility for implementing the commitments contained in the New York Declaration rests with Member States, the Special Adviser stated that the United Nations system had an important role to play in supporting their

realization, especially at the country and regional levels. Her office had already taken concrete steps for compiling actions and commitments by individual entities of the United Nations system in follow-up to the high-level plenary meeting. Initiatives mentioned as priorities in the New York Declaration included the launching of intergovernmental negotiations related to the conference on international migration, for which the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and IOM would provide secretariat support; implementation of the comprehensive refugee response and the consultations to be led by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the global compact on refugees; the global campaign to counter xenophobia, led by the Department of Political Affairs; and the development by the Global Migration Group of guidelines on the protection of the human rights of migrants in vulnerable situations. Furthermore, the Deputy Secretary-General intended to continue to hold regular Steering Committee meetings with all relevant United Nations organizations on the issue of follow-up to the high-level plenary meeting. It was also noted that the issue of internally displaced persons was being taken forward by entities of the United Nations system. In closing, the Special Adviser stated that the Committee's perspective on the need for particular system-wide efforts was timely and much appreciated as an important input to the follow-up process.

72. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee unanimously welcomed the outcome of the high-level plenary meeting and thanked the Special Adviser and her team for the collaborative process through which United Nations entities had been involved in the preparation of the meeting and in the meeting itself. With regard to actions by entities of the United Nations system in follow-up to the meeting, Committee members overwhelmingly pointed to the broad range of existing mechanisms and processes that afforded United Nations entities the opportunity to make a substantive contribution to the implementation of the New York Declaration. Those included, for example, periodic assessments of progress made in the implementation of the New York Declaration, the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, the global campaign to counter xenophobia and the work of the Global Migration Group.

73. Several Committee members highlighted specific substantive issues that needed to be addressed in the follow-up to the high-level plenary meeting and to which United Nations entities could make an important contribution, including the provision of migration data and gender statistics on migrants and refugees; inclusion of refugees in labour markets; remittances; linkages with implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals; gender-responsive measures; children and education; internally displaced persons; and protracted displacement. In addition, some Committee members highlighted specific follow-up actions for which their respective entities had been assigned lead responsibility in the implementation process. The important human rights content of the New York Declaration and its two annexes was underscored, including attention to violations as drivers, recognition of the rights of migrants regardless of their status, the right to due process and the threat of xenophobia, as well as the explicit recognition of the place of human rights in the follow-up processes.

74. Regarding system-wide efforts in follow-up to the high-level plenary meeting in the area of migration, many Committee members expressed strong support for the

work of the Global Migration Group and its role in inter-agency coordination. The Group, which was currently led by UN-Women and brought together 20 United Nations system entities with relevant expertise, was deeply committed to supporting Member States' efforts to implement the New York Declaration. The Group was already engaged in critical follow-up work by developing principles and practical guidance for the protection of the human rights of migrants in vulnerable situations. In addition, the Global Migration Group was well placed to coordinate United Nations system support for the development of the proposed voluntary guidelines on the treatment of migrants in vulnerable situations, as well as to prepare a joint United Nations system report as input to the international conference on migration to be held in 2018. Some members pointed out that the Group needed to undergo some internal reflection to ensure that it was indeed capable of meeting the demands and expectations of the changed political and institutional landscape regarding the issue of migration. Others suggested that it also needed to ensure that its activities were inclusive of the entire range of United Nations system expertise.

75. Root causes and drivers of displacement and human mobility were specifically identified by Committee members as issues in need of greater and more coherent attention within the United Nations system. In that context, specific political and environmental issues, such as fragile States and climate change, and their linkages to displacement, were highlighted. It was noted that while the Global Migration Group played an important role in inter-agency coordination, other parts of the United Nations system also had notable contributions to make towards a coherent and coordinated approach to migration and disaster displacement. For that reason, while the Committee expressly favoured a light-touch approach to system-wide coordination and coherence based on existing mechanisms, members also saw a potential substantive role for the Committee — and its broader and more diverse membership — in the future and proposed that the Committee remained seized of the matter.

Conclusion

76. **The Committee agreed to keep the matter of system-wide follow-up to the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants under review and, as appropriate, consider progress on the issue at future sessions with a view to making further contributions, from broad and diverse system-wide perspectives, in the area of policy coherence and programmatic coordination across United Nations efforts.**

VII. Agenda item 6: Climate change

77. Recalling the historic adoption of the Paris Agreement in December 2015, the Chair invited the Committee to turn its attention to the topic of climate change. Recognizing the need to develop a coordinated approach, the Committee, at its thirty-first session, had approved a set of common core principles for a United Nations system-wide approach to climate action (see CEB/2016/4, para. 57), which CEB had endorsed in April 2016. As the next step, the Committee had requested the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), at a

suitable senior level, to develop a proposed road map for a possible comprehensive United Nations system strategy on climate change. Accordingly, the Committee had before it, for its consideration, a proposal prepared by the Assistant Secretaries-General of the three designated entities, in consultation with key stakeholders.

78. The lead authors of the proposal, Magdy Martínez-Solimán (UNDP), Thomas Gass (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) and Elliott Harris (UNEP), noted that their efforts had been guided by the common core principles and the previous Committee discussions on the topic. The strategic approach would aim at providing substantive and operational guidance to accelerate implementation of the Paris Agreement as an integral part of the broader 2030 Agenda. It was intended to be light and to provide added value to existing mechanisms and each entity's ongoing and planned efforts to maximize collaboration within the United Nations system on climate change, with a focus on areas of high impact. That could entail deepening existing collaboration or identifying action areas where joint approaches could be more effective in tackling new challenges. Furthermore, the proposed approach recognized that ensuring coherence between policy and country-level implementation would require close coordination between the Committee and UNDG.

79. The proposal was accompanied by a road map containing a proposed process and timeline with concrete steps and deliverables, geared towards finalizing the preparation of the strategic approach for endorsement by CEB at its first regular session of 2017. The presenters underlined the importance of a collaborative and inclusive process in taking the effort further. In that context, they especially noted the valuable contributions made to date by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and others, including the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Climate Change, and invited all agencies with relevant expertise to actively contribute to the development of the strategic approach. To that end, they suggested the establishment of a time-bound core task team of senior technical advisers, while confirming their willingness to continue to guide the effort to a successful conclusion.

80. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee welcomed the proposal and expressed strong agreement with the need and rationale for the development of a strategic approach. In particular, the focus on maximizing collective impact while recognizing each entity's unique contribution was much valued. The Committee widely favoured a light-touch, succinct and strategic document. Many stressed the need to develop it swiftly, noting that addressing climate change was a race against time and that any delay would increase the challenge, given its cumulative impact. It was also underlined that the strategic approach could serve as an inspiration for individual entities' climate change strategies, many of which were in the process of being finalized, and as guidance on mainstreaming climate change effectively across the United Nations system's collective policy work in support of the 2030 Agenda. The Committee expressed strong agreement with the intention to clearly articulate the interlinkages between climate action and sustainable development as part of the strategic approach.

81. In addition, the approach should encourage the transformational changes that were required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of

the Paris Agreement, as well as measures to support governments in reaping the benefits of that transformation. The Committee further stressed the importance of linking policy, programme and operations, which required close linkages with UNDG, noting that ultimately, the success of the strategic approach would be determined by the degree to which it translated into accelerated action at the country level. The approach would therefore need to focus on impact and results, based on services the United Nations system could provide to Member States at the country and regional levels in response to their needs. Critical in that regard was a concerted and long-term effort by the United Nations system to build national capacities in key areas, including climate services such as early warning systems. The role of United Nations country teams in driving the implementation of the strategic approach was noted, as well as the need for further guidance in that area.

82. Several Committee members stressed the importance of partnerships and cooperative action at all levels, involving the private sector, civil society and local governments, with a view to mobilizing support for more ambitious climate action. Going forward, it was important to align work undertaken in pursuit of the strategic approach with ongoing initiatives and partnerships, such as the recently launched subnational climate action hub. Similarly, the strategic approach should ensure linkages and incorporate lessons learned from related efforts, including the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience, as well as other international treaties and protocols. It should reference and encourage further efforts of the United Nations system to lead by example in reducing its own environmental and climate footprint. Finally, it was suggested that a monitoring and impact assessment framework for the implementation of the strategic approach be developed, which would strengthen the accountability of the United Nations system with regard to climate change action.

83. Turning to the proposed key action or impact areas around which the strategic approach could revolve, a number of members highlighted specific work done by their organizations on which the strategic approach could draw, as well additional areas requiring the United Nations system's collective engagement. These included support to Governments in converting nationally determined contributions into investment plans and reformed policy, with a view to increasing the ambition of action over time; aligning financial investments with a 1.5 degrees Celsius pathway; and loss and damage associated with climate change, including displacement and migration in the context of slow-onset events, disasters and crises, recognizing that migration could also be an adaptation strategy in some cases. Bearing in mind that most developing countries had included the agricultural sector in their nationally determined contributions, the importance of climate change adaptation and mitigation actions for the implementation of the Paris Agreement was emphasized. The use of information and communications technologies to advance climate action was also noted as a strategic opportunity.

84. Furthermore, particular emphasis needed to be given to the role and voices of women in climate action. That required, among other things, the availability and use of disaggregated data and gender-sensitive analysis to guide United Nations system efforts across the different action areas. Given the urgency of the issue, advocacy efforts geared to increasing political will for transformational change and mobilizing constituencies to demand climate action were also seen as an action area

that could be further explored in the strategic approach. In that regard a suggestion was made to complement the focus on capacity-building, which applied mainly to low- and middle-income countries, with an area of advocacy and constituency-building to address situations where shortcomings were related not primarily to capacity, but to political will. In addition, given the disturbing (and growing) global pattern of persecution and assassination of environmental defenders, a focus on protection was also suggested.

85. The Committee expressed support for the establishment of the proposed core task team with a time-bound mandate to develop the strategic approach. In that regard, several members (WMO, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, IOM, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-Women, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, WFP and UNHCR) took the floor to express their interest in joining the core task team.

86. In concluding the discussion, the Chair noted the Committee's strong support for the proposal to develop a United Nations system strategic approach on climate change action through a core task team of United Nations entities with relevant expertise in the area. The Committee expressed appreciation to the Assistant Secretaries-General of UNDP, UNEP and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for their leadership to date and for their willingness to provide guidance to the work of the core task team.

Conclusion

87. **The Committee approved the proposed road map for the preparation of a United Nations system-wide strategic approach on climate change action (see annex III to the present report), pending incorporation of the revisions emanating from the discussion, and agreed to the establishment of an ad hoc time-bound core task team to prepare the strategic approach, under the continued guidance of the Assistant Secretaries-General of UNDP, UNEP and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and taking into account the discussion just concluded, for consideration by the Committee at its thirty-third session.**

VIII. Agenda item 7: Summary of information items

88. Prior to the thirty-second session, the information notes referred to below were sent to Committee members for review and endorsement on a non-objection basis. No objection was received and comments received were duly reflected in the final versions of the notes. The Chair therefore invited the Committee to take note of the reports, which provided updates on progress made since the thirty-first session of the Committee.

89. Given that the information notes covered longstanding topics that were substantively well developed and had been extensively consulted through their existing inter-agency mechanisms, the Committee agreed to the Chair's proposal

that, in future, progress reports would be received and reviewed by the Committee on an annual basis at the fall session, rather than on the current twice-yearly cycle, except when important developments required consideration by the Committee in the interim.

A. Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020

90. The information note prepared by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States reported on the launch of the toolkit for mainstreaming the Programme of Action at a high-level United Nations system event held during the midterm review of the implementation of the Programme of Action. It also brought to the Committee's attention the work planned, in accordance with the political declaration of the midterm review, on investment promotion for least developed countries, to be pursued consultatively by the Inter-Agency Consultative Group for Least Developed Countries, led by the Office of the High Representative, and the United Nations Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity, led by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The Chair invited the Committee to take special note of this upcoming effort to develop a coordinated approach to supporting investment promotion for least developed countries.

B. Reports of UN-Water, UN-Energy and UN-Oceans

91. The information notes prepared by UN-Water, UN-Energy and UN-Oceans provided progress updates on the recent activities of the three inter-agency coordination bodies. In particular, the Chair invited the Committee to note the official launch of the UN-Oceans inventory of mandates, priorities and ongoing and planned activities.

Conclusion

92. **The Committee took note of the information notes. The Committee decided to review progress on these informal items on an annual basis in principle.**

IX. Agenda item 8: Other issues

A. Dates and venue of the thirty-third session of the High-level Committee on Programmes

93. Members were informed of the proposal to hold the thirty-third session of the Committee in New York on 16 and 17 March 2017.

Conclusion

94. **The Committee confirmed the dates of 16 and 17 March 2017 for its thirty-third session, to be held in New York.**

B. Any other business

95. In advance of the session, the Committee had received from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) a briefing note containing a road map outlining the proposed activities of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017, proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/193. UNWTO explained that the International Year presented a unique opportunity to showcase tourism's contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, noting that tourism was specifically mentioned in three Sustainable Development Goals and could also contribute directly or indirectly to all 17 goals. The opening ceremony was to be held in Madrid on 18 January 2017. UNWTO invited United Nations system entities to contribute to one or more of the action lines laid out in the road map and to broadly advocate for tourism as a tool to achieve sustainable development.

Conclusion

96. **The Committee took note of the information shared by UNWTO.**

Annex I

Agenda

Item 1: Risk, prevention and resilience

Item 2: United Nations system leadership model in the post-2015 era

Item 3: Cross-pillar linkages and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Item 4: Equality and non-discrimination at the heart of sustainable development

Item 5: Follow-up to the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants

Item 6: Climate change

Item 7: Summary of information items

- (a) Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020
- (b) Reports of UN-Water, UN-Energy and UN-Oceans

Item 8: Other issues

- (a) Dates and venue of the thirty-third session of the High-level Committee on Programmes
- (b) Any other business

Annex II

List of participants

Chair: Dr. Margaret Chan (WHO)

Vice-Chair: Mr. Navid Hanif (Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

Secretary: Ms. Kayoko Gotoh

United Nations

Executive Office of the Secretary-General	Ms. Karen AbuZayd
	Mr. Paul Akiwumi
Department of Economic and Social Affairs	Mr. Thomas Gass
	Mr. John Wilmoth
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	Mr. Hansjoerg Strohmeyer
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights	Mr. Craig Mokhiber
Regional commissions	Mr. Amr Nour
Office for Disaster Risk Reduction	Mr. Neil McFarlane
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	Mr. Halldór Thorgeirsson
Department of Political Affairs	Mr. Stephen Jackson
Peacebuilding Support Office	Mr. Henk-Jan Brinkman
International Labour Organization	Mr. André Bogui
	Mr. Vinincius Pinheiro
Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations	Ms. Carla Mucavi
	Mr. Lucas Tavares
	Ms. Armine Avagyan
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Ms. Marie-Ange Théobald
	Ms. Marie-Paule Roudil
World Health Organization	Dr. Nata Menabde
	Mr. Werner Obermeyer
	Ms. Ivana Milovanovic

World Bank Group	Mr. Bjorn Erik Glister
International Monetary Fund	Mr. Christopher Lane
International Telecommunication Union	Mr. Gary Fowlie
World Meteorological Organization	Mr. Robert Masters
	Mr. Paul Egerton
International Maritime Organization	Mr. Jesper Holdup
World Intellectual Property Organization	Ms. Lucinda Longcroft
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Mr. Zak Bleicher
United National Industrial Development Organization	Ms. Olga Memedovic
World Tourism Organization	Ms. Cordula Wohlmuther
	Mr. Kazi Rahman
International Atomic Energy Agency	Ms. Tracy Brown
International Organization for Migration	Mr. Ashraf El Nour
	Ms. Lea Matheson
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Ms. Chantal Line Carpentier
United Nations Development Programme	Mr. Magdy Martínez-Solimán
	Mr. Jens Wandel
	Mr. Samuel Doe
United Nations Environment Programme	Mr. Elliott Harris
	Ms. Maaike Jansen
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Ms. Christine Matthews
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	Mr. Sam Rose
United Nations Children's Fund	Mr. Ted Chaiban
	Ms. Madhavi Ashok
	Ms. Yuka Nakamura
United Nations Population Fund	Mr. Ramiz Alakbarov

World Food Programme	Mr. Stanlake Samkange
	Mr. Paul Howe
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes	Ms. Gillian Murray
	Mr. Gautam Babbar
United Nations Human Settlements Programme	Mr. Naison Mutizwa-Mangiza
	Ms. Yamina Djacta
UN-Women	Ms. Lakshmi Puri
	Mr. Moez Doraid
	Ms. Aparna Mehrotra
United Nations University	Mr. James Cockayne
	Mr. Rahul Chandran
United Nations System Staff College	Ms. Claire Messina
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Ms. Abigail David
Development Operations Coordination Office	Mr. Alex Warren-Rodriguez
Secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination	Ms. Simona Petrova
	Ms. Xenia von Lilien
	Ms. Cheryl Stafford
	Ms. Catherine Zanev
	Mr. Silvan Scheiwiller

Annex III

Road map for a comprehensive United Nations system strategic approach on climate change action

I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-first session, held in March 2016, the High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) approved a set of common core principles for a United Nations system-wide approach to climate action and endorsed, in principle, the suggested priorities for coordinated United Nations system action on climate and requested that they be appropriately taken into account in the second-phase effort to develop, under the leadership of the Assistant Secretaries-General of UNEP, UNDP and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, a proposed road map for a possible comprehensive strategy, for consideration by the Committee at a future session (see CEB/2016/4, sect. IV and annex VI). CEB subsequently endorsed that decision, which built on prior discussions, including at the thirtieth session of the Committee, held in October 2015, when the Committee had recognized the need for a new system-wide approach to coordinated climate change action to deliver the best possible joint support to Member States, noting that "business as usual" was not an option (see CEB/2015/6, sect. II).

2. In response to the Committee's decision, a draft proposal for the United Nations system strategic approach has been developed by UNDP, UNEP and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for consideration by the Committee at its current session. This document seeks to provide a starting point for discussions on the substantive elements of a strategic approach, as well as a road map for the process and delivering results. The proposal is informed by guidance received from the Committee at its thirty-first session and is open for inputs and suggestions, particularly to ensure that it is informed by the expertise of all agencies and is relevant and useful for the United Nations system as a whole.

II. Proposal for development of a United Nations system strategic approach on climate change action

3. The proposal is composed of two parts: a section that highlights the rationale, benefits, aim and focus of a potential strategic approach; and a proposed road map that sets out a timeline, as well as a process and working arrangements, for the development of the approach.

A. Need for and benefits of a United Nations system strategic approach on climate change

1. Rationale

4. In light of the comprehensive and ambitious sustainable development and climate change architecture agreed to in 2015, and the growing challenges that

climate change presents for development, the United Nations system is entering an unprecedented era of climate change action and has an important opportunity to organize itself and collaborate better to be responsive to this new context and provide appropriate support for Member States.

5. It is clear that urgent action on climate change is central to the sustainable development agenda. The impacts of climate change can undermine existing development gains and hinder progress to achieve sustainable development. Failure to seize this opportunity will not only mean a failure with respect to Goal 13, the climate goal, but also calls into question the entire range of 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Similarly, climate change action is also an opportunity for sustainable development. Action on climate change through adaptation, mitigation and effective use of finance can drive zero-carbon and risk-informed sustainable development. In a number of key areas, the United Nations system, acting collectively and pooling resources and expertise, has the potential to play an important role in helping Member States to seize this opportunity, building on lessons learned from its pre-2015 climate collaboration.

6. Agreement to important frameworks in 2015, including Agenda 2030, the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, provide a vision and basis for Member States to take action on climate change, and the United Nations system has a central role to play in supporting this. At the same time, Member States need a unified and coherent approach by the United Nations system to navigate this implementation, to avoid duplication in activities and to capitalize on available expertise.

7. Specifically, the United Nations system is expected to play a leading role in supporting Member States in identifying linkages among the recently agreed frameworks, which will make for more effective implementation Such linkages can often be best identified through pooled expertise and action by United Nations system agencies.

8. A United Nations system strategic approach on climate change that addressed these issues and fostered collective action could help to ensure that the United Nations system was "fit for purpose" for climate support and responsive to Member States' needs in the implementation of the relevant global agreements. By demonstrating how United Nations entities can (and intend to) work better together on climate change, a new joint approach also sends a clear signal to Member States and partners that the system stands ready to give the best possible support to effective climate action and is organizing itself appropriately.

2. Identification of existing gaps and definition of the scope and focus of a strategic approach

9. To complement the above rationale, a number of reviews have been undertaken to understand how to strengthen United Nations support of Member States and map the climate change work already under way within the system. The findings of these reviews are important to define the focus and scope of a potential strategic approach.

10. These reviews have identified several gaps which a new joint approach should address with a view to strengthening United Nations system support to Member States. The gaps include:

(a) Insufficient clarity on the United Nations system's role and added value in implementing and enabling the vision presented by the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda and in raising ambition for climate change action;

(b) Insufficient system guidance on synergies between different 2015 agreements to ensure coherent and streamlined support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement;

(c) Lack of coordination efforts that are focused on strategic priorities and delivering impact on the ground through joint climate action;

(d) Limited system collaboration in key thematic areas and processes of relevance to the climate agenda, including emerging climate issues.

3. Proposed aims of the strategic approach

11. Building on the above rationale and identified gaps and needs, it is proposed that any United Nations system strategic approach on climate change would have the following aims:

(a) Substantive guidance:

(i) To encourage and guide integrated action in the areas of climate change and sustainable development and to maximize synergies and deliver co-benefits across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and to enable the United Nations system to provide better support to Member States to advance these two objectives in tandem;

(ii) To identify and foster action in key thematic areas of relevance to the climate change agenda where improved collaboration and shared expertise is needed and adds value;

(b) Operational guidance:

(i) To act as a guiding framework for catalysing inter-agency collaboration on climate change, whereby a joint United Nations system response will achieve the best possible support for Member States in undertaking climate action;

(ii) To act as a tool to enable and encourage United Nations system entities to collaborate and share expertise to address identified gaps and opportunities in climate change support for Member States.

4. Suggested scope of a strategic approach

12. As underscored at the thirty-first session of the High-level Committee on Programmes and reflected within the agreed common core principles, any possible United Nations system-wide strategic approach on climate change should focus on areas where collaboration within the system can strengthen climate action and provide the best possible support and assistance to Member States in implementing the 2015 agreements. Any joint strategy should also accelerate implementation of

the Sustainable Development Goals and make the climate agenda integral to the overall 2030 Agenda.

13. A possible strategic approach is not intended to limit or review individual agency activities, nor to provide oversight of those individual activities. At a time when numerous United Nations system agencies are already undertaking successful climate actions, the value added of a strategic approach is to focus on galvanizing actions that maximize collaboration within the United Nations system on climate change, based on existing work or where joint approaches can tackle new challenges and avoid duplication with a view to improving effectiveness and ensuring convergence of action within the system. The new approach seeks to enhance system-wide accountability on climate action by deepening corporate sustainability efforts (see www.greeningtheblue.org) and by contributing to emissions reduction through programming.

14. A possible strategic approach should also address the importance of linkages between policy and operational aspects of the United Nations system's work in support of Member States and focus on operationalizing the agreed principles, as highlighted by agencies in their discussion at the thirty-first session of the High-level Committee on Programmes (see CEB/2016/4, sect. IV).

15. Reflecting the concerns that have been expressed by the Committee about creating additional and potentially burdensome strategies, a possible strategic approach should be brief, focused and light-touch to be most accessible and useful for agencies and partners.

5. Expected impact and outcomes

16. As highlighted by the High-level Committee on Programmes at its thirty-first session, any potential strategic approach should be clear on its added value for United Nations system action on climate change. Bearing in mind the need and rationale for such an approach, it is expected that it would have clear impacts and outcomes, adding clear value. These include, but are not limited to:

(a) Facilitating and guiding the convergence and coherence of climate action across the United Nations system;

(b) Improved ability to identify opportunities for and maximize impact of collaboration among United Nations system entities;

(c) Increased capacity of the United Nations system to support Member States' efforts to deliver on the 2015 agreements with regard to climate change;

(d) Increased clarity on services offered by the United Nations system to Member States to implement climate action in support of new and relevant frameworks and agreements;

(e) More effective use of resources by pooling expertise and maximizing synergies across the system to enable more effective climate change outcomes;

(f) Acceleration of the United Nations system's work to mainstream climate change in sustainable development.

B. Proposed content of the strategic approach on climate change action

1. Vision for joint United Nations action on climate change and role of the United Nations system

17. A possible strategic approach could play an important role in outlining the United Nations system's vision for collaboration and joint action on climate change in the post-2015 era. Drawing on the gaps and needs identified above, the discussion at the thirty-first session of the High-level Committee on Programmes and the common core principles for climate action, this vision could show how the United Nations system collectively would operationalize the principles. This could include specifics on:

(a) How and why the entities of the United Nations system will work together, and what services they can offer Member States on climate action in support of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and efforts to increase the ambition of climate action efforts;

(b) How the United Nations system will continue to provide normative space and guidance, at the service of Member States, to strengthen the development and implementation of climate change policy;

(c) How the United Nations system works to identify and support synergies between all relevant agreements for successful climate change action and sustainable development;

(d) How the United Nations system is "organizing itself" and its internal policies on climate change;

(e) How the United Nations system works with partners (including the private sector and civil society) for climate action.

2. Proposed substantive "impact areas" for collaboration

18. As highlighted in this paper, a possible strategic approach would add value if it focused on taking advantage of opportunities for collaborative and/or joint United Nations system work around key areas or issues, where (a) skills, expertise and resources of agencies can be pooled for better and more effective impact; and (b) new and emerging areas of climate change action would benefit from a unified approach by the United Nations system. Action in these areas would support operationalizing the common core principles.

19. Illustrative examples of possible impact areas might include normative guidance on climate change; mainstreaming climate change in development policies, programmes and practice and implementation; disaster risk reduction and resilience; science, technology and knowledge; data and observation, climate finance; humanitarian-climate nexus (including peace and security); and advocacy and constituency mobilization. The concrete impact areas for United Nations system collaboration and joint action are to be developed as part of the actual drafting process of the strategic approach.

C. Format of the strategic approach on climate change action

20. In accordance with the desire to keep any new approach "light-touch", it is proposed that the strategic approach be presented in the form of a short (4 to 6 page) guiding document. The paper would be based on the points outlined above, supplemented by any feedback from HLCP and high-level guidance from CEB.

21. It is proposed that the document be accompanied by two annexes:

(a) A set of common United Nations guiding principles for climate change action, providing the guiding framework for the approach;

(b) An infographic representation of the common United Nations system strategic approach; this is intended to be an easily accessible summary of joint work under way in the United Nations system and the services that the system can provide to Member States.

D. Road map for development of a strategic approach

22. The road map for the strategic approach is contained in the appendix to the present paper.

Appendix

Draft road map for the development of a United Nations system-wide strategic approach on climate change

Phase	*Time frame*	*Action*	*Purpose*	*Coordination*	*Contribution*	*Resource Requirements*
Agreement on way forward	Thirty-first session of HLCP	HLCP to consider the proposal and provide guidance on the way forward	To provide overall feedback and comments on proposed approach and road map for the development of a United Nations system strategic approach on climate change To express interest in contributing to the development of the strategic approach, if agreed upon To identify appropriate coordination arrangements and lead entities to coordinate the development of the system strategic approach	Assistant Secretaries-General of UNEP, UNDP and DESA	HLCP members and observers	Technical inputs from agencies
	October 2016	Finalize proposal based on feedback received during thirty-first session of HLCP and any further written inputs. HLCP members to nominate candidates for participation in core task team that will develop the strategic approach	To ensure that inputs and feedback from HLCP members and observers are appropriately reflected in the final draft proposal To provide an opportunity for all relevant entities to contribute to development of the strategic approach To establish the core task team under the leadership of Assistant Secretaries-General of UNDP, UNEP and DESA	UNDP, UNEP and DESA, with HLCP secretariat	HLCP members and observers	Verbal and written feedback and review from HLCP members and observers; drafting and technical capacity from agencies that wish to contribute to the process of developing the joint approach

Phase	*Time frame*	*Action*	*Purpose*	*Coordination*	*Contribution*	*Resource Requirements*
Guidance and direction received from CEB	November 2016	CEB to address topic of climate change during the session	To receive high-level strategic and policy guidance from CEB as input to the development of the strategic approach on climate change action	CEB secretariat	CEB members	Briefing of CEB members by relevant staff on ongoing process of development of system-wide strategic approach within context of HLCP
Drafting and work undertaken on strategic approach	November 2016-February 2017	Drafting of strategic approach on climate change action (including infographic) through consultative and inclusive process	To develop and agree on key components and impact areas of the approach to ensure it reflects relevant issues and implementation capacities of United Nations system entities	Core task team	UNDG and other relevant inter-agency coordination mechanisms	Drafting and technical capacity from agencies that wish to contribute to the process
	March 2017	Final draft of strategic approach to be considered by HLCP at is thirty-third session for approval and onward transmission to CEB for endorsement	To seek final comments/approval of HLCP	Core task team		
Strategic approach presented for endorsement and finalized	April 2017	United Nations system strategic approach on climate change action to be considered by CEB for endorsement	Chair of HLCP to present approach for endorsement	CEB secretariat	CEB members	
	From March 2017 onwards	Implementation of joint approach	Achievement of objectives of the strategic approach		All United Nations system entities	Implementation capacity

Abbreviations: HLCP, High-level Committee on Programmes; DESA, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat.